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## Sermon from Rom. 5, 12—21.

(By request.)

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This text contains two doctrines, very strange and very offensive to the reason of man. It speaks of imputed sin and of imputed righteousness. It makes us sinners by proxy, and saints by proxy. It teaches the doctrine of original sin and the doctrine of the vicarious atonement. The former doctrine includes the race in the fall of Adam, the latter in the redemption of Christ. I may safely say, that, were it not upon the authority of Scripture, no man would dare to preach these doctrines. No philosophy could ever have invented them; they transcend anything that our intellect can conceive regarding the depravity and the recovery of our race. They are extremely humiliating to our natural pride. However, the entire plan of salvation rests on these two doctrines; they are fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

Permit me to speak to you regarding

### ADAM AND CHRIST, AND OUR SHARE IN THE WORK OF BOTH.

1. *We are sharers by nature in the guilt of Adam;*
2. *We are sharers by grace in the righteousness of Christ.*

#### 1.

St. Paul places before us in a grand comparison and contrast the two beings who have determined the fate of our race, Adam and Christ. He calls Adam "the figure of Him that was to come." Christ, the promised Redeemer, was to be like Adam in this, that he was to be a man like Adam had been before the fall, perfectly sinless; and in this, that as Adam's fall has affected all the posterity of Adam unto perdition, so the work of Christ has reclaimed all the posterity of Adam from perdition. By the inscrutable counsel of God the fate of mankind was bound up in the work of these two beings.

Adam's disobedience certainly affected, in the first place, himself. He lost the favor of God, a good conscience, and his original righteousness. He incurred the penalty of God's Law, death. If that penalty had been executed immediately after the fall, there would have been an end of the human race. Satan would have triumphed over God by having destroyed God's chief handiwork, man, by whom the earth was to be peopled with human beings, whom God intended after a period of probation to remove into a heavenly abode, there to share His eternal bliss and glory. God might have destroyed Adam and Eve, and might have created new men. But God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; He wants to save sinners. Moreover, God did not intend to change the order made at the beginning, when He created man and wife and joined them in marriage. The wiles of the tempter must not force God to give up His original plan, that "of one blood all nations of men" should spring up on all the face of the earth. God had told Adam and Eve before the fall that they should become the great ancestors of all that dwell in the earth. God from the beginning viewed Adam and his doings not only as the doings of a single individual, but as the doings of the representative of the race. It was in the power of Adam to bring blessings or the curse upon his posterity. He had been grandly endowed by the Creator, and in proportion to his endowments was his responsibility. There is nothing unjust or unfair in all this arrangement.

The disobedience of Adam, then, necessarily extended in its effects to Adam's children. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" "through the offense of one many be dead;" "the judgment was by one to condemnation;" "by one man's offense death reigned by one;" "by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" "sin abounded;" "sin hath reigned unto death," — all these statements I take, word for word, from our text. Yea, Paul even concedes that Adam's posterity "had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," *i. e.*, they had not committed that particular act of eating of the forbidden fruit, or any like act by which a positive command of God had been transgressed. Still they were subject to death. Moreover, Paul refutes an objection: some had claimed that the reason why Adam's posterity had to die was, because they had transgressed the law of Moses. Paul argues that this could not be, because the Ten Commandments were published more than two thousand years after Adam, and in all that time all men had died excepting a single one, Enoch, whom God took.

Paul, then, plainly teaches, that Adam's sin was imputed to the race. The ruin of the head involved the ruin of the body. We are accounted sinners already at our birth, not on account of any sin

which we have personally committed, but on account of a sin which has been transmitted to us by our parents and imputed to us by God, and which causes us also forthwith to sin personally.

But what is it that the imputation imputes? Jehovah solemnly avers: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father the iniquity of the son, but the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." God does not act counter to this declaration when He imputes Adam's sin and Adam's guilt to Adam's children. If we examine the Scriptures, we hear the holy writers tell us that the race had actually become depraved through the fall of its ancestor; that men are shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin, flesh born of flesh, corrupt fruit of a corrupt tree; that the imagination of their hearts is evil from their youth, their intellect darkened, their affections inclined to all manner of evil, their will hostile to God and their energies directly opposed to the will of God, and that thus man is a child of wrath by nature. God imputed to the race no imaginary sin, but an actual depraved condition which had resulted from the ancestor's disobedience. The sin which God imputes is not a fiction but a fact; it does not exist by arbitrary assumption in the mind of God, but it exists, verily and truly, in our own mind as a root and source of all sin which we commit from the moment of our birth.

I know of no exact parallel in the affairs of men that might be adduced as an illustration of the awful truth here recorded. But a few faint likenesses I might allude to. We have in this view of original sin on a grand scale what is often witnessed in a minor degree in the life of men and nations. Does not the wicked example of a parent corrupt the whole family? Does not the dishonesty of one banker bring ruin upon thousands? Has not hundreds of times in the course of the history of the world the folly of one great leader drawn hundreds of thousands into perdition? Look at the fanaticism of the modern Turk, of the mad Mullah of Africa, of the bigoted blindness of India's Brahmins, and the fierce hatred of the Chinese Boxer. All these things are fruits, the seeds whereof were sown a long, long time ago. Even an infidel poet has acknowledged that it is the curse of every wicked deed that ceaselessly it must engender evil.

But, you say, this is shocking. I agree with you. I know of nothing more appalling than this topic of the transmission of Adam's sin and guilt to his posterity. It is the darkest tale in the human language. But shocking or not, the question is: Is it so? We must know the facts and face them. Sentimentality has no room in the search after truth. Now here are the statements of the divine Word; all around us we witness the sad consequences of what is here taught. Even the agnostic science of our age has begun to talk in its way of hereditary depravity, of the deterioration of families and races. The testimony is conclusive, the handwriting is on every wall, and he that

runs may read. Let no mortal attempt to dodge the bewildering issue that is here set before him. Let not the pilgrim over life's highway to eternity turn aside when he reaches this mountain, let him not circumvent this gulf. The way to heaven goes through this text in Romans, and there is no by-path that will land you at the pearly gates just as well.

Might not God have prevented Adam's fall? How would you have God do this? By His almighty power? He certainly could have made Adam so that he could not sin. This objection is as old as Adam. Adam tried to throw the blame of his disobedience on God; for he claimed: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree." It is true, God could have made Adam good by force, even against Adam's will and inclination. But in that case Adam would have ceased to be a responsible agent, and his service mere slave's drudgery. Such service is an abomination; no generous person accepts such service, and should we demand of God that He should take what men refuse? On the same theory, the father who dismisses his son to enter the world well equipped for the duties of life, would incur censure if that son turns prodigal; because the father might have shut him up at home. Coercive goodness is no goodness at all.

Look what care God had taken to prepare Adam for the temptation! I shall read you the simple story of the fall and merely emphasize the salient points therein. Gen. 2, 15—17. Here is God's order. Was that order understood? Listen! Gen. 3, 1—3. Eve was prepared; she knew that the offer of the serpent was wicked, and she resisted it. Gen. 3, 4. 5. Eve is silent; she weighs the matter. Gen. 3, 6. She freely determines her mind to transgress. Now, let no one rise to censure God for not having palsied Eve's hand when it reached out after the fruit. For, again I say, there is no virtue in enforced goodness. Why should God capture Eve's hand when her heart was far from Him?

## 2.

But I want to tell you also what God has done after the fall for Adam and his race. Were God a man, He should probably in anger have rejected Adam and permitted him to run his evil course to the dire end. But no sooner was the guilt incurred than God took steps to remove the guilt. True, Adam must feel the consequences of his sinning. As a wholesome reminder of his grievous error he was made to reap the bitter fruits of his sowing. The toil and worry and misery of this life commenced for him. But God extended to Adam the hand of mercy in the very act of passing judgment upon him. Yea, God did not pass the full sentence upon Adam at all. Death in its worst form, the destruction of body and soul in hell, was not to be inflicted upon Adam. God told Adam that in the fullness of time One would

come, born of a woman, a true man in every respect, who would take Adam's place and force Satan to fight the battle which Adam had lost over again, and who would vanquish Satan, thereby destroying his dominion over the human race. And when the time was fulfilled, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, that He should redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Christ came, the great Redeemer. Himself, the only-begotten Son of God, very God of very God, consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, coequal with Him in glory and majesty, He was made flesh. Men beheld in Him a human being in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. They beheld His glory, a glory, etc., John 1, 14. Now, in Christ original man in all his purity and righteousness had appeared. He was immaculate, sinless. But to this holy man, who was at the same time God, the Father imputed the sins of the world. He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made in Him the righteousness of God. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

Take up at home, my friends, the four Gospels and follow the Savior's course through life from Bethlehem to Golgotha. Ah, there was matchless obedience in this Son of man; no flinching from any duty, no misstep, no sinful word, no wayward thought,—a complete pattern of that being which God had created out of the dust, a being such as His Law demands. There was righteousness to perfection, every virtue in full glory. Lovingly, compassionately, pitying man with unutterable pity, He went in search of the lost children of Adam. He pleaded with them; He told them of the love of their Father in heaven, and of the home above. He allayed their fears, He calmed their consciences, He soothed their pains, He wept with them in their griefs. And this innocent Teacher of fallen man was taken by the determinate counsel and foreordination of God and was slain. Obedient unto death He bent His head as a lamb to the slaughter, and yielded up His ghost into His Father's hand. His was the death, as it had been the life, of a righteous man.

Now, the entire work of Christ is imputed to sinners. He has completely taken the place of His sinful brethren. His living and His dying are counted in behalf and in favor of our race. "The grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." "The free gift is of many offenses unto justification." "They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." "By the

righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification." "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." "Grace did much more abound." "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord." All these statements I take, word for word, from our text. There is a complete parallel between Adam and Christ, with this difference only that, whereas Adam transmitted to his posterity the guilt contracted by one act of disobedience, Christ has by His substitutive work removed the guilt of every iniquity, sin, and transgression. There is more grace than there has been wickedness. The fires of hell are quenched by the blood of the cross. God has perfectly cured all our diseases, and removed us out of death into life. Our misery has procured for us an incomparably great redemption. We have been bought more dearly than we were sold: we were sold for an apple, and we were purchased with the heart's blood of God's Son. The righteous God has become reconciled to us through the gracious God. In the most wonderful and adorable manner mercy has seasoned justice, and we exclaim: "Blessed guilt that brought us such a Redeemer!"

There is no longer any guilt resting upon mankind in the eyes of God. Christ has restored all to God's favor. By the side of the cradle of the newborn infant He has placed the baptismal font with the saving flood of regeneration. In the midst of earth's teeming millions there rises here and there, on hill and plain, the spire of a Christian church with the symbol of the cross beckoning to every son and daughter of Adam the pardon of God in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. He that believes the Gospel shares Christ's merit; he becomes an heir of God and co-heir with Christ. For the misery entailed upon him by his ancestor Adam, Christ gives him peace, comfort, immortality, life, and glory everlasting. Amen.

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### Sermon on Matt. 25, 14—30.

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The Law of God is much misunderstood. Some speak of it as if it referred to outward actions only. They imagine that they have kept the fifth commandment if they have killed no one, or the seventh, if they have never by force taken their neighbor's property. This is a gross misunderstanding of God's Law. God's Law refers not only to outward actions, but to the innermost thoughts and feelings of our heart. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," 1 John 3, 15. Even the hatred of your heart makes you a murderer before God, and excludes you from heaven. Again God declares: "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," Matt. 5, 28. God sees your innermost thoughts and feelings, and demands that these be pure, righteous, and holy.

Another misunderstanding of some is to imagine that God in His Law *forbids only*, forgetting that in reality God *commands* rather than forbids. We do not call the Law "The Ten Prohibitions," but, "The Ten Commandments." And yet, how many there are who speak of their own goodness by telling us what they do not do, and what they have not done. What does God forbid when He tells us: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"? Does He not rather command than forbid? He who does what God has forbidden sins by commission, but he who does not what God has commanded sins by omission. And these terrible, damning sins of omission are so often entirely overlooked and forgotten. Therefore our Lord takes them up in this parable and teaches us the lesson about

#### THE SINS OF OMISSION.

1. *Wherein these sins of omission consist, and*
2. *How God punishes them.*

##### 1.

In our text Jesus tells us a story in order to teach and illustrate important spiritual truths. He says that a man, who was about to travel into a far country, called his servants and gave them charge of his goods. To the one he gave five talents (that is, about 5000 to 10,000 dollars, as the talent varied somewhat in value according to time and place), to another he gave two talents, and to a third one talent only. Jesus tells us that the master gave them more or less according to his estimate of the ability of each. The master then took his journey. After a long time he comes home again and calls upon his servants to give an account of all that each did with the goods entrusted to his charge. He finds that the servant who had received five talents had traded with these and had thus doubled the property. And likewise, he that had received two also had gained other two. The master praises these faithful servants, and rewards them for their service. But when the master comes to the servant who had received one talent only, that foolish and lazy man addresses his master thus: "Lord, I knew thee that thou wast an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine." And with that this servant returned the one talent only and no more to his master. That master at once denounced this servant as a faithless, wicked, and slothful man, and condemned him to be punished with the greatest severity.

One of the truths which Jesus teaches us by this parable is this, that sins of omission consist in neglecting to do all the good we can with the gifts and opportunities which God gives us. God is the Master, you are the servant, the talent is the opportunity which

God grants you to do all the good you can. Those who faithfully use the gifts of God, their money, strength, abilities, and time, in the service of God and their neighbor, they are the faithful servants whom God will reward; but he who neglects to do this is that wicked servant whom God will punish. We are not told of anything that this man had done which was forbidden, we are told that he had *not done the good* which he could have done; he sinned by omission.

Now look about you and within you; who are those that are guilty of such sins of omission? There are, first of all, the large number of young people especially who do not take care of the days of their youth to prepare themselves for a station of usefulness in later life. They idle away their time and waste it foolishly, instead of trying to learn all they can, to acquire good habits and useful abilities, whereby they may later glorify God, and render valuable service to their neighbor. My dear young people, it is God's holy will that you make the most of your opportunities. It is the serious business of your youth to learn of your elders and parents, and in every place, at home or abroad, in the school, in the shop, or in the office, to strive to acquire such knowledge and skill whereby you may become workmen that need not be ashamed. Above all things you should endeavor to grow in the knowledge of God's precious Word. That child or young person who does not use every opportunity granted by God to increase in wisdom and in favor with God and with man is guilty of grievous sins of omission.

Then there are those parents who neglect to do all they can for their children, who comfort themselves with the thought that they have not taught their children any wickedness. Oh, my dear father and mother, do you imagine that a parent who allows his child to perish for want of food could excuse himself by saying he had not outright killed his child? A parent who allows his child to grow up in ignorance, could he claim to be guiltless because he had taught his child no error and superstition? Even so a parent who does not take proper pains and care to instruct or have his child instructed in the Word of its Creator and Redeemer cannot excuse himself. Be sure of this, God, who has given you these children with their immortal souls, will ask you on the day of judgment, "What have you done with these precious gifts?" Woe, eternal woe to that father and mother who have neglected to do their part that their poor children might be saved from poor lost sinners to become sons and daughters of God, and heirs with Christ, of the inheritance that fadeth not away. These sins of omission, of the neglected and buried talent stamp thousands as wicked and slothful servants before God.

Then there is the church member who has time, but "does not find time" for the service of God's house. His brethren wait in vain

for him to appear in their meetings. He has time for all else, but not for God and God's work. Or he has money and means in abundance, but the cause of the Gospel receives little or nothing of this wealth. He has many opportunities to aid missions, to support his own church, to give and to sacrifice for the objects of Christian education, and the extension of church work, but he flatters himself that he does no wicked thing and is as good as others. Woe on the day of judgment to such as could have done good and did it not! Their sins of omission, whereby they neglected to do the good which they could have done, mark them as wicked and slothful servants.

Again, Jesus Himself mentions a host of sins of omission, in this same chapter, when He pictures to us the act of judgment on the last day. He tells us that the Son of Man will say unto those on His left hand: "I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." He will explain these accusations by saying: "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." In these words our Master tells us that everyone of us who knows of anything that he could do for his neighbor, to help or aid him, and does not do it, is guilty of these sins of omission. Such a one does not serve his Lord with the talent entrusted to his charge. This condemns all those who seem very respectable and decent people before the world because they have never been condemned for any great wrong or crime actually committed against their neighbor, but who, nevertheless, lead lives of selfishness. They do not take part in any undertaking for the relief of their suffering fellow-men. They contribute nothing, or not in accordance with their means, to the hospitals or asylums where their poor brethren find relief. Nor do they take the proper interest in the greatest relief work ever undertaken for suffering mankind, the spreading of the glad tidings of the grace and mercy of God among lost sinners. They could do their part in relieving their poor suffering fellow-men from temporal misery and even from eternal damnation, but they do not do it.

Oh, do not for a moment imagine that such sins of omission are a small or trifling matter. Jesus, after explaining the nature of these sins, tells us also of their gravity, and that God is going to punish these sins with the utmost severity.

## 2.

*Let us now see how God is going to punish these sins of omission.*

Jesus tells us that the master said to this servant: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I

should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Just so God will meet those who have neglected their duties with stern rebuke. He will not accept their foolish excuses. He will not be satisfied with the fact that they have "done no harm," but will charge them with their neglects, their failure to make the most of their opportunities. He will condemn them for not accomplishing what they could have accomplished with the time and means at their command. He will take from them even that which they have. He will take from them the gifts which they have failed to use aright. Death will cut short their season of grace, and rob them of every opportunity to accomplish anything more. Death will beggar them. Naked, poor, and miserable, they will be compelled to leave all behind them. Time, riches, family, comforts, and friends, will be taken from them.

But that is not all. Jesus tells us that the lord commanded other servants to cast this unprofitable servant into outer darkness; "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

How fearful, according to this, will be the punishment meted out to those who have not done their Master's will! They will not only lose all the gifts, blessings, and opportunities of this present life, but they will be cast into that outer darkness of hell, from which there is no escape and where weeping in despair and gnashing of teeth in vain remorse is their lot forever. You see that the wrath of an offended God will come upon them to the uttermost. Nor is this the only place where Jesus pronounces the curse of God upon those who sin by omission. In His description of the last judgment which follows our text in this very chapter, and of which I spoke to you before, what will the Judge say to those who did not help their brethren? What will He say to those who did not aid in the works of charity, who did not do their part for the upbuilding of the Christian Church out of the ruins of the devil, who did not do what they could for the Christian education, the preaching and teaching of God's Word among young and old? What will He say to them? He will say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" O terrible fate! That will be the fearful sentence pronounced upon those who have neglected their duty, have not done their Master's will, who die guilty of the sins of omission.

In the well-known story of Lazarus and Dives, Jesus paints for us the terrible end of those who have had no mercy on their fellow-men's suffering. The rich man in that narrative is not accused of any crime or sin except this, that he lived well himself, but did not employ his gifts and opportunity for helping poor Lazarus, or comforting him in his misery. Dives sinned by omission, he did not do

all he could have done,—and how did God punish him? The rich man suffered in body, in mind, and in soul in hell, being tormented in that flame whose fires shall not be quenched. Aye, when he begged for relief, he was told that this was the time for his torment. All relief was denied him, and he was informed that no one could leave that place of suffering.

Thus God punishes the sins of omission. He visits them with His wrath and displeasure, with temporal death, and with eternal damnation.

Just so our Lord pronounces the sentence of damnation upon unbelief: "He that believeth not shall be damned!" But what is unbelief but the worst sin of omission by which the unbeliever does not believe what he ought to embrace by faith?

Woe, therefore, to him to whom the Lord will say on the day of judgment, "Thou hast not done what thou oughtest to have done!" Do not for a moment imagine that the sentence of condemnation will fall upon those only who have committed murder, or theft, or adultery, or blasphemy. The sentence of condemnation in all its severe and silencing denunciation will fall upon you also who have not used your gifts, money, health, strength, time, and opportunities to build God's kingdom, to advance the glory of Christ, to aid His poor struggling Church, and to help your poor suffering fellow-men.

How is it with you? Does your conscience bear witness that you have neglected your duty in one or the other way? Are you doing your whole duty to your God, to your church, and to the suffering and the poor? Are you making use of every opportunity, or is laziness, and selfishness, and greed ruling your heart? How dare you face God living in such neglects? Repent, therefore, turn from this wickedness which has brought thousands to eternal destruction. To-day, and now, there is still help for you. That same Lord who here in our text denounces these sins is the very Savior who has provided help from their curse. By His suffering and death upon the cross He bore the curse for these sins, and Himself accepted and endured the punishment for your guilt. Go, then, in faith and prayer to this your Savior and ask that your sins of omission be forgiven and blotted out. Promise now that you will arise and with great earnestness seek to know the Lord's will and to do that will. Neglect your duty no longer, but devote all that you have, and all that you are, to the service of that good and gracious Lord from whom all your blessings come. Make the most of your opportunities, to accomplish all you can for God's glory, for the betterment of man's condition, especially for the salvation of souls, so that when you are called to account, you may be one of those whom God will greet with the words of praise and commendation: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," etc. God grant it! Amen.      M. S. S.

## Wedding Address.

RUTH 1, 16. 17.

(For a pastor.)

IN JESUS CHRIST, THE BRIDEGROOM OF OUR SOULS, BELOVED FRIENDS:—

“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Thus spake the Lord, our God, at the creation of the world when Adam found no companion for himself. And the Lord God made a woman and brought her unto the man, and blessed them, and thus instituted the estate of matrimony. No wonder therefore that Solomon says: “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing.” But there have been people, and still are people, who advocate celibacy, who say it is better for men not to marry, yea, who forbid ministers of the Gospel to wed. St. Paul, however, tells us that “marriage is honorable in all,” hence also in ministers; yea, he brands the “forbidding to marry” as a mark of the great Antichrist, and says: “Have we not power to lead about a wife as well as other apostles?”

But even more. God has also in clear, plain, and unmistakable words told every minister of the Gospel that he can wed with a good conscience, for thus it is written: “A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.” Hence we see, marriage is a divine institution, honorable in all, and may be entered into by all.

Should we not, then, think that this estate is a happy estate, and that they who enter it would experience nothing but joy and happiness? Surely so. And yet, alas! the very opposite is often the case, and that, sometimes even in a pastor’s family. What may be the reason? One reason, no doubt, is this, that they who enter this estate often do it unadvisedly, not weighing what the Word of God teaches concerning it. That you, my dear friends, may be preserved from this, permit me to direct your prayerful attention to the words of Holy Writ, as found in the Book of Ruth, in the first chapter, where they read: “Whither,” etc. These beautiful words ought to be

### THE MOTTO OF EVERY CHRISTIAN BRIDAL COUPLE.

Permit me to apply them

1. *To you, the bride, and*
2. *To you, the groom.*

#### 1.

“Whither thou goest, I will go.” Thus spoke Ruth to Naomi as the latter was about to leave the land of Moab and return to the land of Judah. It was a strange land to Ruth, the land of Judah, a land

which she had never seen, and of which she had been taught to think ill. Moreover, she knew not what dangers might await her, what distress might befall her, and what troubles might be in store for her there. Nevertheless, her firm resolve was: "Whither thou goest, I will go." May the sun of gladness cheer my heart, or may the night of sadness and affliction cause it to droop and pine, "whither thou goest, I will go." Through thick and thin, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, "whither thou goest, I will go."

Happy the bride who makes these words of Ruth her own! You, my friend, are in a like position as Ruth was. You are about to follow your beloved to a strange place where you have never been; you know not what awaits you there. But happy shall you be, if this is your motto: "Whither thou goest, I will go." Whatever the dangers and difficulties, whatever the toils and cares, whatever the trials and tribulations: "Whither thou goest, I will go." Thy joy shall be my joy, and thy sorrow my sorrow. In weal and woe, in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health: "Whither thou goest, I will go."

Again: "Where thou lodgest, I will lodge." Naomi had no cozy home, no beautiful residence, no house with modern conveniences. Once, indeed, she had been rich, but now she was poor, for we are told that she "went out full," but returned "empty." Ruth, however, is content to lodge where Naomi lodges. Thy dwelling-place shall be my dwelling-place; thy abode my abode; where thou lodgest, I will lodge, and though thy pillow, like Jacob's, be a stone. O happy bride who makes these words her own, and says to her beloved: Where thou lodgest, I will lodge, and though it be in a log-house or a dugout. I say, happy bride, for remember "godliness with contentment is great gain."

Again: "Thy people shall be my people." Though the Jews differed greatly from the Moabites, having different customs, styles, ways, and manners, yet Ruth will make them her people, will associate with them, conform herself to them, and be concerned for them. Yea, though the Jews were a hated and despised people, yet Ruth will cast her lot with them and will share their trials and tribulations, their hardships and afflictions. Their sorrows shall be her sorrows, their joys her joys, their hope her hope.

May you, dear friend, also in this respect follow the example of Ruth and say to your beloved: "Thy people shall be my people." See, you have given your heart and hand to a pastor, to a minister of God's Church. Be concerned, therefore, not only for him, but also for his congregation. Make his people your people, set them a good example in word and deed, be concerned for their welfare, help them wherever you can, and, above all, remember them in your prayers. A pastor's wife who makes her husband's people her people is not only a great

help to her husband, but also of untold blessing to the church, and eternity first will reveal how much good she has accomplished.

Ruth proceeds: "Thy God shall be my God." She bids farewell to the false gods of Moab and will henceforth serve the God of Israel. O that all who enter the estate of matrimony would worship one and the same God, the only true and living God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. How unhappy often the family where unity of faith is lacking, where the husband worships the true God, but the wife the god of this world; or where the wife serves Christ, but the husband Satan; where one is walking the narrow way which leadeth unto life, but the other the broad way that leadeth to destruction. On the other hand, how happy the family whose hearts are knit together by the bonds of one faith; where husband and wife worship the same God, serve the same Lord, follow the same Master, believe in the same Redeemer, and trust in the same Savior. Hence the motto of every Christian bridal couple should be: "Thy God shall be my God."

Finally Ruth said: "Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Her choice was for life. No trouble, no poverty, no want, no affliction should separate her from her beloved. Death, and death only, should be able to sever the tie. Even so marriage is the lifelong union of two persons, for "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Happy, therefore, they whose motto is: "Nothing but death shall part thee and me." Such will cheerfully bear the burdens of life, assisting each other in bearing the cross, knowing that "together we stand, but divided we fall;" "with each other we are strong, against each other we are weak."

May God, then, grant you, my sister in the Lord, to make these words of Ruth your words: "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

## 2.

But permit me to apply these words also to you, my brother in the Lord.

As Ruth went with Naomi, so your bride is about to accompany you. She is about to leave friends and relatives, the fond scenes of childhood, and to travel to a distant country, where she will dwell among strangers. You are her one and all. She has entrusted herself entirely to you. Her welfare and happiness rests, to a great extent, in your hands. Hence be to her what Naomi was to Ruth. Be kind, loving, and tender-hearted towards her. As a servant of the Word you know that you are to "love her even as yourself," that you

are to "nourish and cherish her as the Lord the Church," and that, though "her head," yet you are "not to be bitter against her." You are to care for her bodily and spiritually, to kindly admonish her when necessary, and, above all, to comfort her, for you know, or will soon learn to know, that a minister's wife has a hard position in this life. Some consider her too quiet, others too lively; for some she dresses too plain, for others too stylish, etc. The eyes of the whole congregation are upon her and notice her every movement, and oh, how numerous often are they who find fault! And this will make her feel sad and downcast and discouraged, and in such and similar times of trouble you are to comfort her with the Word of God, to strengthen her faith, and to direct her thoughts to Him who is our stay and staff, our refuge and strength, our very present help in trouble, Jesus, our Savior.

A pastor's family, my friends, is not exempt from trouble and sorrow. On the contrary, a pastor's family is exposed to cares and toils and hardships that others know nothing of. Nevertheless, lose not heart, but "wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart," yea, say:

Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged,—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend as faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness,—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

**May your daily prayer be:**

Jesus! be our Guide,  
As through life we glide;  
Faithfully in our behavior  
May we follow Thee, dear Savior:  
Lead us by Thy hand  
Through to Fatherland.

Amen.

O. K.

## Outline for Gospel of Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 16, 1—9.

On the authority of Scripture we hold these two truths, viz.: The end does not justify the means, and: No person earns heaven by his own works. Maintaining the contrary is tantamount to destroying both the Law and the Gospel. The Law demands as the

source of our every action the fear of God and unselfish service of our fellow-men. Doing evil that good may come does not comport with these motives. The quality of an action must be judged by the divine standard of the commandment, not by the intention of the doer. Aiming at righteousness by engaging in unrighteousness is like sowing thistles and expecting to gather grapes.—The Gospel teaches that everlasting life is the free gift of God to a believer in consideration of Christ's work. If any human merit is mingled with the work of Christ, salvation is impossible. The apostle hurls a curse at any one attempting this.—Can the truths just stated stand by the side of our Gospel?

WHAT IS IT THAT CHRIST COMMENDS IN THE PARABLE OF THE  
UNJUST STEWARD?

1. *What does He command in the action of the steward?*

- a. Not his injustice; on the contrary, Christ, by calling the steward unjust, by describing his crooked dealings, and by contrasting him with the children of light, has plainly rejected this steward as a wicked and worldly person.
- b. But his prudence in recognizing danger, in casting about for help, and his resolute action in making his opportunities serve him.
- c. Such prudence and energy are bestowed upon believers and are sanctified unto them for the ends of their heavenly calling. Our time of grace a period of probation. Comp. v. 10—12. How does the alertness of church-people in their sphere of action compare with that of worldly men in theirs?

2. *What does He commend in regard to the use of money?*

- a. Christ calls money "the mammon of unrighteousness," because it is very often, also in the present instance, acquired, held, and employed in an unrighteous manner, and with the view that it is an end in itself. Thus it becomes an idol.
- b. But wealth is a useful means to good ends. It makes friends, saves persons from danger, etc. The steward understood this power of money, and hence made lavish use of it.
- c. Earthly possessions are bestowed upon believers and are sanctified to them, etc. God probes our faith not only by adversity, but also by fortune. Those who enter heaven receive the testimony of such as have been aided from their abundance, Matt. 25, 35. Money does not purchase heaven, but its use attests faith, which obtains heaven. How do church-people compare, etc.?

